

*Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh*

**LESSON PLANS FOR SAFE ENVIRONMENT  
CORRESPONDING WITH *GOD WITH US* CURRICULUM**

**Pre School – *GLORY TO GOD***

**Lesson 11 I'm Thankful I Can Help Others  
(Teacher's Manual, page 187)**

**Give the children practical examples of how they can imitate the boy in the story who shares his five loaves and two fishes with Jesus and the crowd. Help them to understand that being kind to others and sharing makes us feel good about ourselves.**

**Let the children know that it's nice to be with friendly people and most people are kind to children. But if they ever feel uncomfortable about being with someone or about the way someone touches them, they should stay away and talk to a person they trust.**

**Note: It is not always a stranger who makes us uncomfortable.**

**Kindergarten - *GOD IS WITH US***

**Lesson 5 God Gave Me My World  
(Unit One, Student Text, page 5)**

**This lesson provides an opportunity to talk about ecology and each person's responsibility to take care of our world and thank God for it. Respecting animal and plant life at an early age lays the foundation for respecting and valuing human life. Take the children for a "Nature" walk, recognizing all the colors, scents, symmetry and beauty of the good things of the earth.**

**Remind the children that taking a "Nature Walk" is a wonderful thing to do. But they must never wander off alone in unfamiliar places. They must learn how to protect themselves at all times and say:**

- **"NO" to strangers who offer a ride.**
- **"NO" to strangers who offer treats.**
- **"NO" to strangers who invite you in.**
- **"NO" to strangers who ask for help.**

## **Grade One – GOD IS LOVE**

### **Lesson 1      Our Church Family (Student Text, pages 2 and 3)**

Ask the class how the children on pages 2 and 3 are alike and how they are different. Tell the class that people come in different sizes, shapes and colors. All were created by God and should be treated with respect. Family members show they care about each other by what they say and do for one another. Even though we have disagreements at home sometimes, we must always try to be respectful and loving toward each other.

Often, families show their love for each other by a hug or a kiss. This should make us feel loved and special. If anyone touches you in a way that does not feel right it's OK to tell them you don't like it and to stop. If they do not stop, you must tell someone you trust.

## **Grade Two – GOD GIVES LIFE**

### **Lesson 3      Jesus Is Sent to Lead Us to the Father (Student Text, page 11)**

In the story of Cain and Abel, help the children understand that:

- ❖ Respecting others means that I believe they are children of God just as I am
- ❖ It is wrong to be jealous of other people because we all have our own special gifts
- ❖ To deliberately hurt another person makes God very sad. When we see examples of people being hurt on videos and TV, it is very wrong.
- ❖ Explain to the children there are different kinds of touch, hugs, kisses, handshakes, a gentle touch on the shoulder. When these touches make us feel loved and appreciated, they are good touches.
- ❖ A bad touch is one that makes you feel uncomfortable. You should say “NO”, “STOP” or “I DON'T LIKE THAT” to any touch that is unwelcome.

## **Grade Three – GOD CALLS US TOGETHER**

### **Lesson 1      Our New Life With God (Student Text, pages 2 and 3)**

The story of Zaccheus is a beautiful example of people who are physically different. The Bible tells us he was short in stature and other people said he was not honest. Yet, Jesus singled him out to have dinner at his house. Our culture and the media brainwash us to think that people with perfect bodies are more popular than others. Remind the children that:

- ❖ Our bodies are a gift from God
- ❖ We must treat our body with respect
- ❖ No one has a right to hurt our body in any way
- ❖ If someone does hurt our body, we must tell someone we trust
- ❖ God wants us to keep our bodies healthy and cares about us as individuals

## **Grade Four - GOD'S PROMISE IS FULFILLED**

### **Unit One**

Long before Jesus came upon earth and any books were written, God was at work among His people. God spoke to them in special ways and told them how He wanted them to live. One of the prayers in the Old Testament is Psalm 50, written by King David. In this prayer David says, "Create in me a clean heart O God." A clean heart is one:

- ❖ that is not selfish
- ❖ does not make fun of the way other people look
- ❖ talks to a trusted adult when something doesn't feel right
- ❖ refuses to listen to jokes or stories that make other people look or feel bad
- ❖ does not try to trick you, scare you, or promise you things to make you do something you don't want to do.

## **Grade Five – SHARE**

### **Lesson 1      Good News is for Sharing (Student Text, page 5)**

**Book Five is an introduction to the adult way of living the Christian life. It is a transitional period from childhood to adolescence. This text explores the many different ways the student can share their gifts with others. Expand on responses to the question: “What is really important to me?”**

- ❖ In God’s plan everyone is special. Each person is different in a variety of ways and that is good.**
  
- ❖ It is all right to be different. We mature at different rates.**
  
- ❖ To realize that problems arise for people who are wrongly persuaded that they are not worth much and are not loved.**
  
- ❖ Not to be judgmental.**
  
- ❖ Stand up for yourself and ask for help when you need it.**
  
- ❖ To know there is help available for people who suffer from family abuse. People in the community or in my parish family can help us be safe when there is danger or the chance of harm.**
  
- ❖ To understand that sometimes even people we like do things we don’t like. Sometimes things start out OK and then change. If this happens, its OK to say “no” and to say “stop.” If it does not stop, know it is not your fault no matter what the situation is. Only the adult is responsible for abusive behavior.**

**Grade Six – RESPOND**

**Lesson 1 – We Are Called to Grow**  
**(Student Text, Unit One, page 6 – Prayer for Growth)**

**PRAYER FOR GROWTH**

**O God, help me to be this day  
and every day of my life  
faithful to You.**

**Help me to govern my thoughts and  
actions according to the standards  
of your Son, Jesus.**

**Help me to keep ever before my eyes  
the gift of Your Holy Spirit  
dwelling in me.**

**For You are holy always,  
now and ever,  
and forever. Amen.**

**POINTS TO REMEMBER**

- 1. We live in a world of change: change happens around us every day. Our bodies are constantly changing. They are a gift from God that must be respected by ourselves and others. If anyone touches your body in ways that are inappropriate you must tell someone you trust.**
- 2. Any touching which has to be kept secret is not a good touch.**
- 3. People who truly love us, will respect us.**

**Grade Seven – BECOMING**

**Lesson 1, Page 5 - Why Life**

**The activity “All About Me” is to help the student reflect upon their dignity as a creature of God and the way they look at life.**

**Reflection question No. 4, “Name something in which you are trying to improve yourself” can be an opening for a self-image inventory. There are many things children this age do to hide their low self-esteem. A low self-esteem makes one vulnerable, immune to abusive situations and weak in dealing with conflict.**

**Have the students reflect on the following questions:**

- 1. Do I feel comfortable with people?**
- 2. Am I afraid to say what I think?**
- 3. Can I laugh at myself when I make mistakes?**
- 4. Who are my friends?**
- 5. Do I believe that people really care about me?**
- 6. Am I fun to be with?**
- 7. What special gifts have I received from God that convinced me that He loves me?**

**Grade Eight – JOURNEY**

**Unit One**

**Lesson 1 – My Personal Journal  
(Student Text, page 7)**

**“WHO AM I”**

**I am a person – not a thing to be manipulated, a tool to be used,  
an object to be pushed around  
I am a subject in my own right, free to initiate, decide, determine  
I am a unique, never-to-be-repeated individual,  
with a mind, a soul, with feelings and fantasy.**

**I am a past –  
I have a history that goes back in time to the earliest fathers of mankind.  
I did not choose my hair, my nose, the color of my skin or eyes  
But I am the heir of countless generations.  
I am proud of where I have been and of those who have gone before me.**

**I am a presence – a link between what has been and what is yet to be  
I cannot be ignored, put aside, overlooked  
I am here and now  
I occupy a space, I breathe the air  
I am a body, a shape, a form  
I am flesh and blood, energy and matter.**

**I am a power –  
I am a communications center, a headquarters, a control tower  
I command a legion, an army, a fleet  
I have influence, I can take a stand, I am an example to someone  
I am will and self-determination.**

**I am a possibility –  
I have a destiny, a vocation, a future  
I can make a difference in my life and in the life of the world  
I have the right to choose, to decide,  
To live my life with intention or let others live it for me.  
To become involved in the action or sit on the sidelines and watch.**

**Grade Eight – JOURNEY (cont'd)**

The poem speaks about the uniqueness of a person and their potential to make the world a better place. In the last verse of the poem, a line reads, “I have the right to choose, to decide.” Lead the students in a discussion on reviewing the ways they were taught to protect themselves at an early age. One of the ways they were taught was to distinguish between “good” and “bad” touch. Remind the students that:

- ❖ They can walk or run away from a negative touch from anyone including friends, siblings, parents or relatives.
- ❖ A welcome touch brings a sense of being loved and safe.
- ❖ A forced touch brings pain, discomfort or displeasure.
- ❖ Abuse occurs when someone does not respect another’s boundaries, uses power, tricks, threats or violence to cross or change another’s boundaries.

Encourage the students to talk to a trusted adult if they have had a negative experience involving touch.



## Lesson Plan for Safe Environment High School Level

**Objective:** To help the students recognize the qualities of relationships that are healthy and life giving.

To recognize abusive relationships

**Lesson:** Initiate a discussion on the definition of the word “relationship”. Emphasize the fact that “right” relationships foster the personal, spiritual and emotion growth of both persons.

The qualities of healthy relationships include, but are not limited to the following:

- ❖ **Ability to communicate.**  
To be able to talk about anything, share feelings, dreams, hopes, and fears; to know that the other person is really listening
- ❖ **Ability to show affection.**  
To be able to express one’s feelings and show that one cares about the other by the way one treats him or her.
- ❖ **Forgiveness.**  
To be able to forgive the mistakes of the other; to be able to trust in the forgiveness offered by the other and let the past go; to not hold a grudge
- ❖ **Honesty.**  
To be able to be truthful about everything, including feelings
- ❖ **Vulnerability.**  
To feel comfortable being one’s self; to let down one’s guard; to be able to risk being known personally and honestly; to feel safe
- ❖ **Dependability.**  
To be there for each other when needed; to keep commitments
- ❖ **Humor.**  
To be able to relax, laugh, and have fun together
- ❖ **Romance.**  
To be able to be romantic without pressuring the other into an uncomfortable physical relationship
- ❖ **Patience.**  
To realize that relationships go through rough times, but that doesn’t mean the relationship is poor; to be willing to work through rough times.
- ❖ **Freedom.**  
To not be possessive or jealous; to feel comfortable about the other having friends; to be able to spend time apart.

## **Lesson Plan for Safe Environment** **High School Level**

Page 2

**Abusive relationships are obviously very different. Often they may seem at the beginning like healthy relationships, but after the initial “honeymoon” stage of the relationship is over, they become harmful and hurtful.**

- ❖ **Abuse occurs when someone does not respect another’s boundaries; uses power, tricks, threats, or violence to cross or change another’s boundaries; or inflicts hurtful or unwanted behavior (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) on another person.**

**Abuse in relationships can take various forms:**

- ❖ **Emotional abuse: putting down the person, making the person feel bad about him/herself, excessive criticism**
- ❖ **Coercion and threats: making or carrying out threats to do something physically hurtful, threatening to expose embarrassing secrets.**
- ❖ **Sexual abuse: coercing a person to engage in sexual acts against her or his will, physically attacking the sexual parts of one’s body, treating a person like a sexual object**
- ❖ **Economic abuse: destroying one’s property, using money or gifts as leverage in return for sexual favors.**
- ❖ **Isolation: maintaining surveillance, controlling what a person does or who a person sees or talks to.**
- ❖ **Blaming, Denying: refusing to accept responsibility for abusive behavior, blaming the victim causing the abuse.**
- ❖ **Intimidation: acts designed to frighten a person such as frightening gestures, displaying weapons, smashing objects, driving crazily.**

## **Lesson Plan for Safe Environment** **High School Level**

Page 3

- **Although violence and abuse have numerous causes, underlying or accompanying many of these is the abuser's need for power and control. Often times, the victims of abuse appear as a threat to that need or serve as a scapegoat to fill that need. To the abuser, violence may often appear to be acceptable behavior for maintaining power and control over others. Being in control may seem to increase self-esteem, reinforce individual's beliefs about masculinity or femininity, or relieve the feelings of loss of control in other areas of the abuser's life. Date rape is a prevalent form of dating violence to which many young people are exposed.**
- **The abuser is a product of deep-seated problems that do not make him or her an evil person, but do make him or her a person in need of professional help. In an abusive relationship, the immediate concern is the person being abused and how to enable that person to break the cycle of abuse in order to prevent it from occurring again. There is also a secondary concern for the abuser and enabling that person to receive the help they need to change their pattern of behavior.**
- **It is not uncommon for a victim of abuse to experience some of the following: fear, guilt, shame, loneliness, anger, rage, denial, repression, self-punishment, alcohol and drug abuse, continued involvement in abusive relationships, an unhealthy view of sex, a loss of faith, or fear in seeking help.**
- **The reaction of other family members may not be much different and may demonstrate a lack of knowing how to respond appropriately to a victim of abuse.**

**Conclude the lesson by assuring the students that help is available for anyone who is in an abusive relationship. There are people and agencies ready to offer help to individuals in abusive relationships. All they need to do is ask for help.**

**[Note to Teacher]**

**Prepare a list of local agencies that offer help to individuals in abusive family situations. Check with your Pastor ahead of time and follow the protocol in passing this information on to your students.**